

Risk Perception for HIV Infection
Among Young African American
Women with a History of STD in
Dallas County

Dallas Young Women's Survey (1999-2000)

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Authors and Contributors

India Dedmon

Joseph Rush, Charu Puri Sharma, Douglas Shehan,
Anne Freeman, Mariama Darboe Janneh

HIV Epidemiology Research and Behavioral Studies

Community Prevention and Intervention Unit

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas

Introduction

- African American Women continue to represent a disproportionate rate of HIV and AIDS cases
- Personal perception of risk for HIV is an important step in changing behavior and preventing new infections
- Our analysis looks at the perception of risk for HIV among young African American women with a STD history in Dallas County

Background

- Nationwide, African American Women accounted for 64% of HIV cases reported among women in 2001 (CDC)
- In Dallas County, African American women comprise approximately 20% of the female population but accounted for 59% of all female HIV cases reported in 2002 (Dallas County Surveillance data)

Background

Young African American Women and HIV

- Of young women with HIV nationwide, 69% are African American (CDC, 2001)
- 37% of HIV cases in young women with an identified risk are due to heterosexual contact (CDC, 2001)
- Although the perception of risk for HIV is considered an important factor in risk taking behavior, limited research has been conducted in this area as related to young African American women

Background

Young Women's Survey (YWS)

- YWS was a clinic based survey conducted from 1999-2000 by UT Southwestern in collaboration with TDH and CDC
- Primary Objectives included estimating STD prevalence and understanding risk behaviors associated with HIV/STD among young African American women

YWS Methods

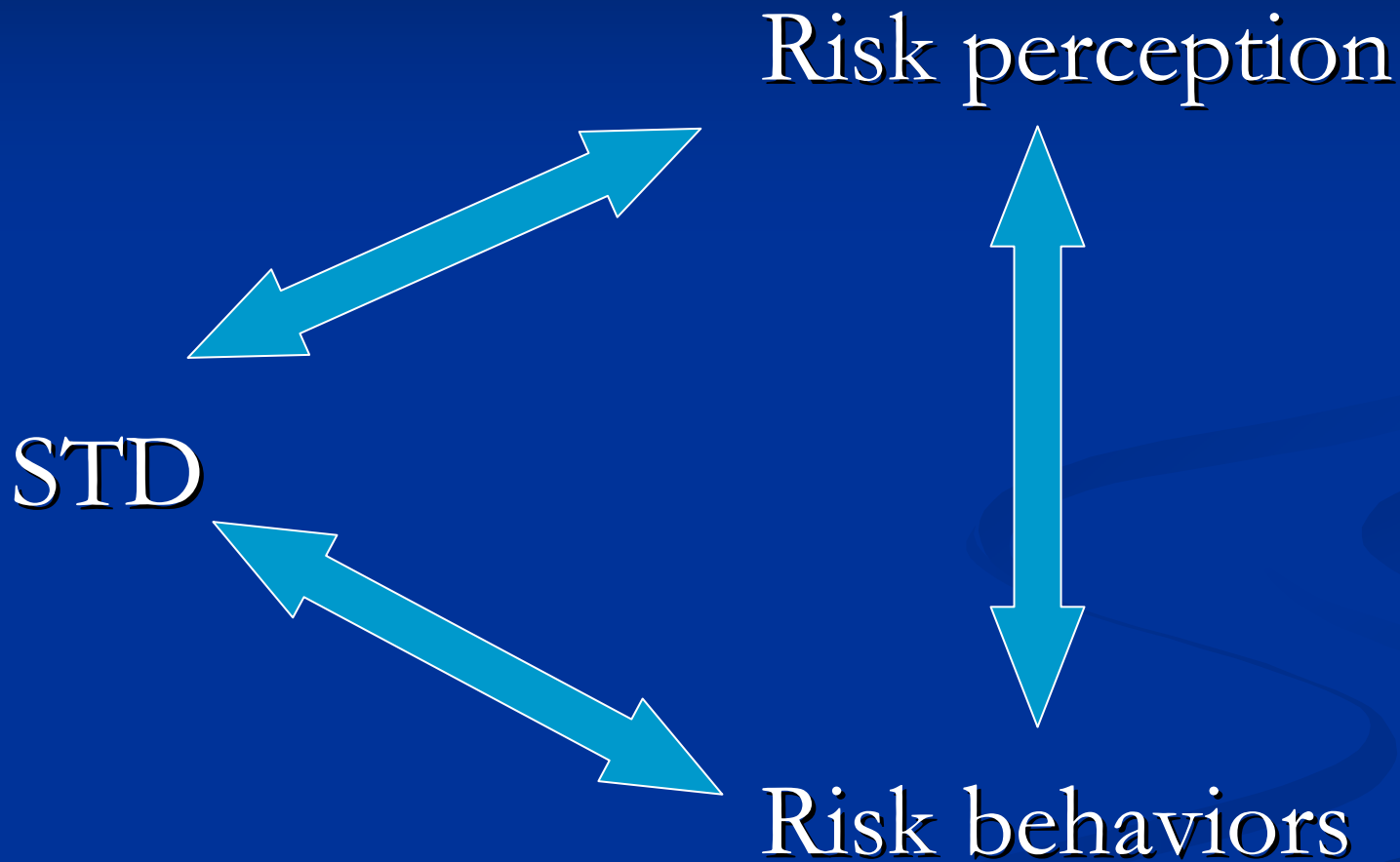
Study Description

- **Setting:** 3 Family Planning Clinics in Dallas County
- **Eligibility:** African American women ages 15-24, Sexually active (last 12 months), seeking family planning services
- **Data:** Interviewer administered quantitative survey and medical record abstraction

YWS Methods

- STD history was considered a surrogate marker for increased risk for HIV
- History of STD was defined as a current infection with Chlamydia, Syphilis or Gonorrhoea (from medical records) or self reported lifetime history of any STD
- Variables concerning STD history, self-perception of risk for HIV and risk behaviors were explored using bivariate analyses

Analysis Overview



Results

- 308 eligible women enrolled
- 84% enrollment rate
- 73% of all participants did not feel that they were at risk for HIV
- 60% declined a free HIV test

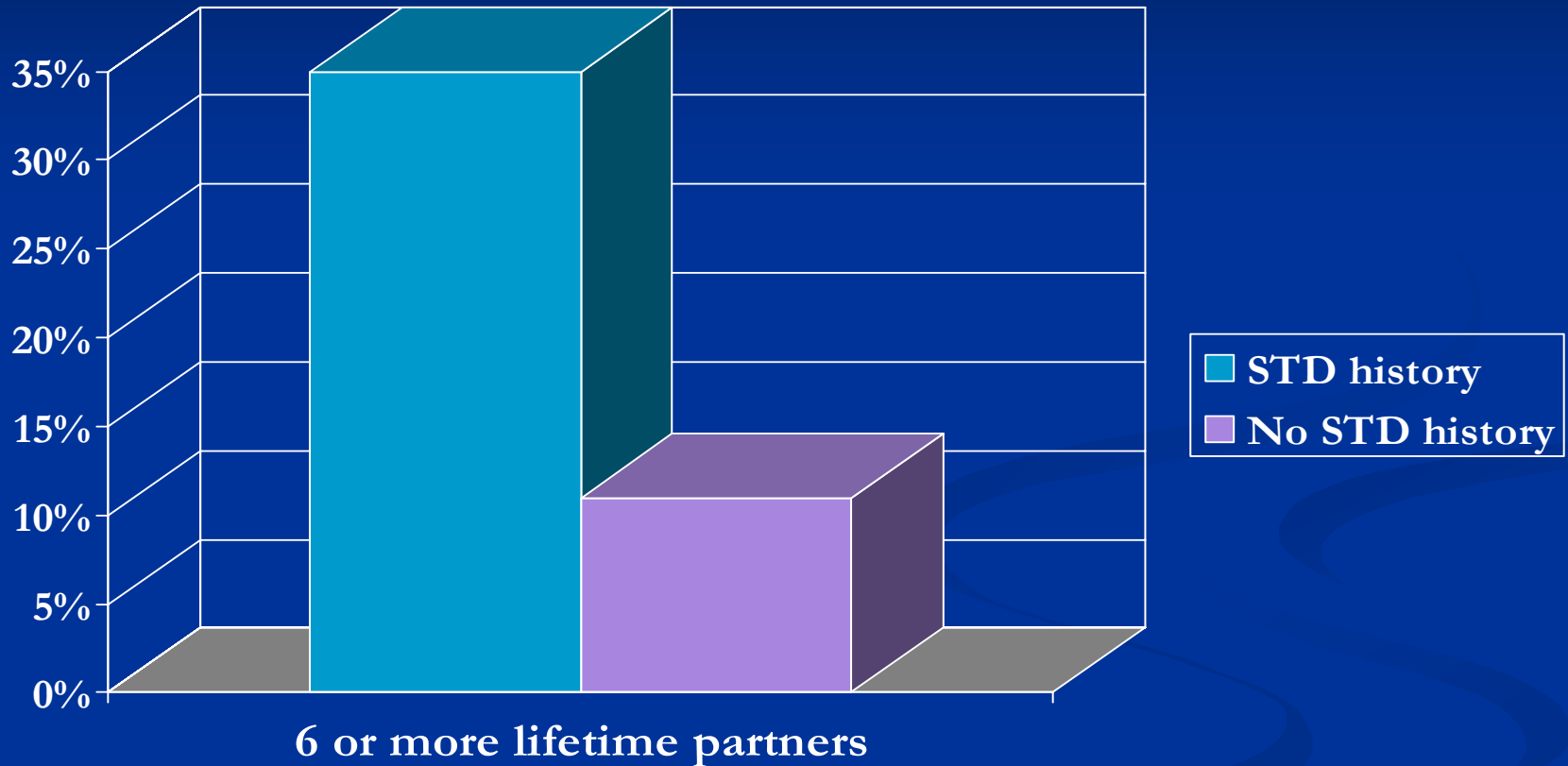
Results

STD History and Perception of risk

- 52% had a history of STD; of these women
 - 75% did not feel that they were at risk for HIV infection ($p=.037$)
 - 42% reported that it was unlikely that they could become infected with HIV ($p=.036$)
 - 81% disagree that they may have been exposed to HIV ($p=.013$)

Results

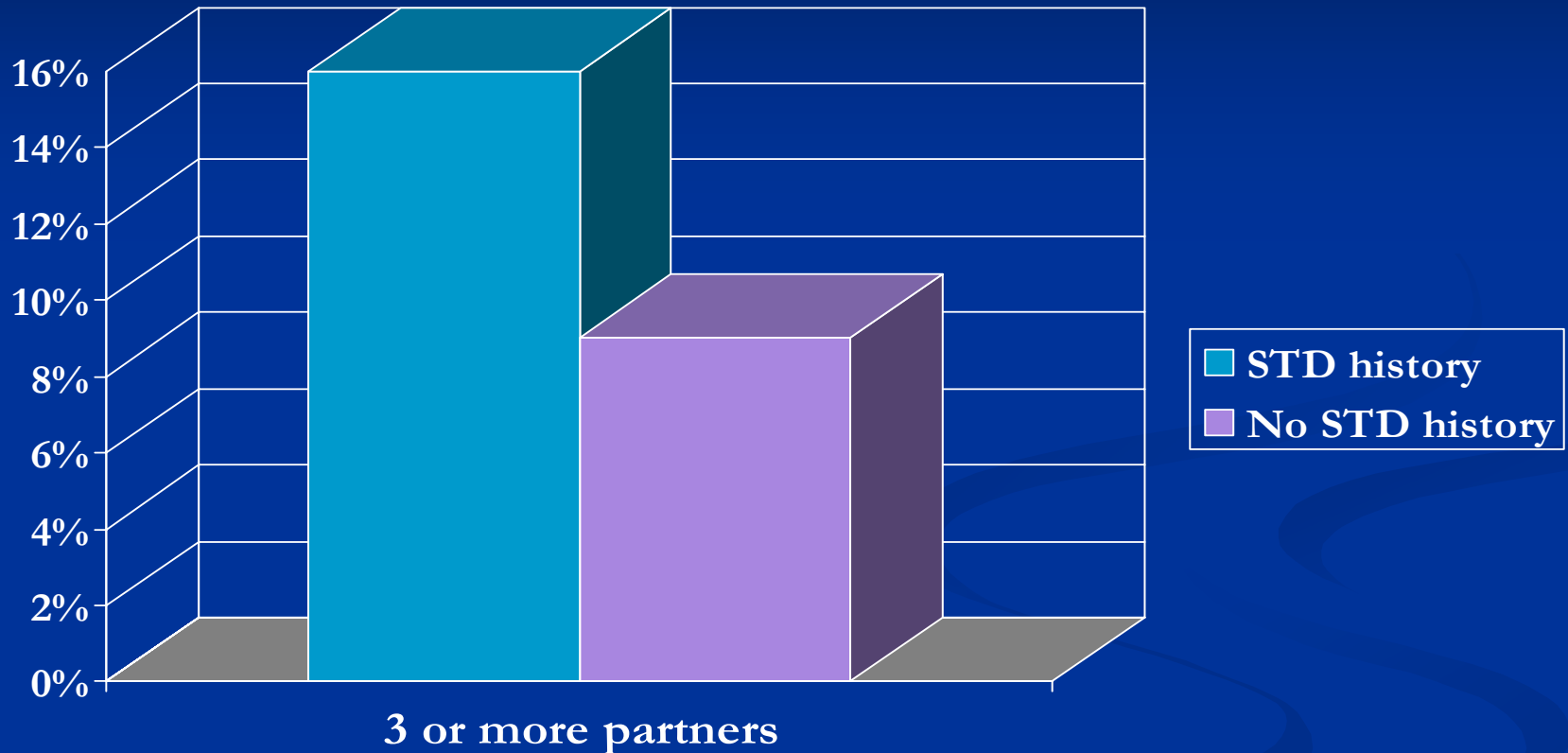
STD History and Risk Behavior



- STD history is significantly associated with having 6 or more lifetime partners (OR 4.5, 2.4-8.3)

Results

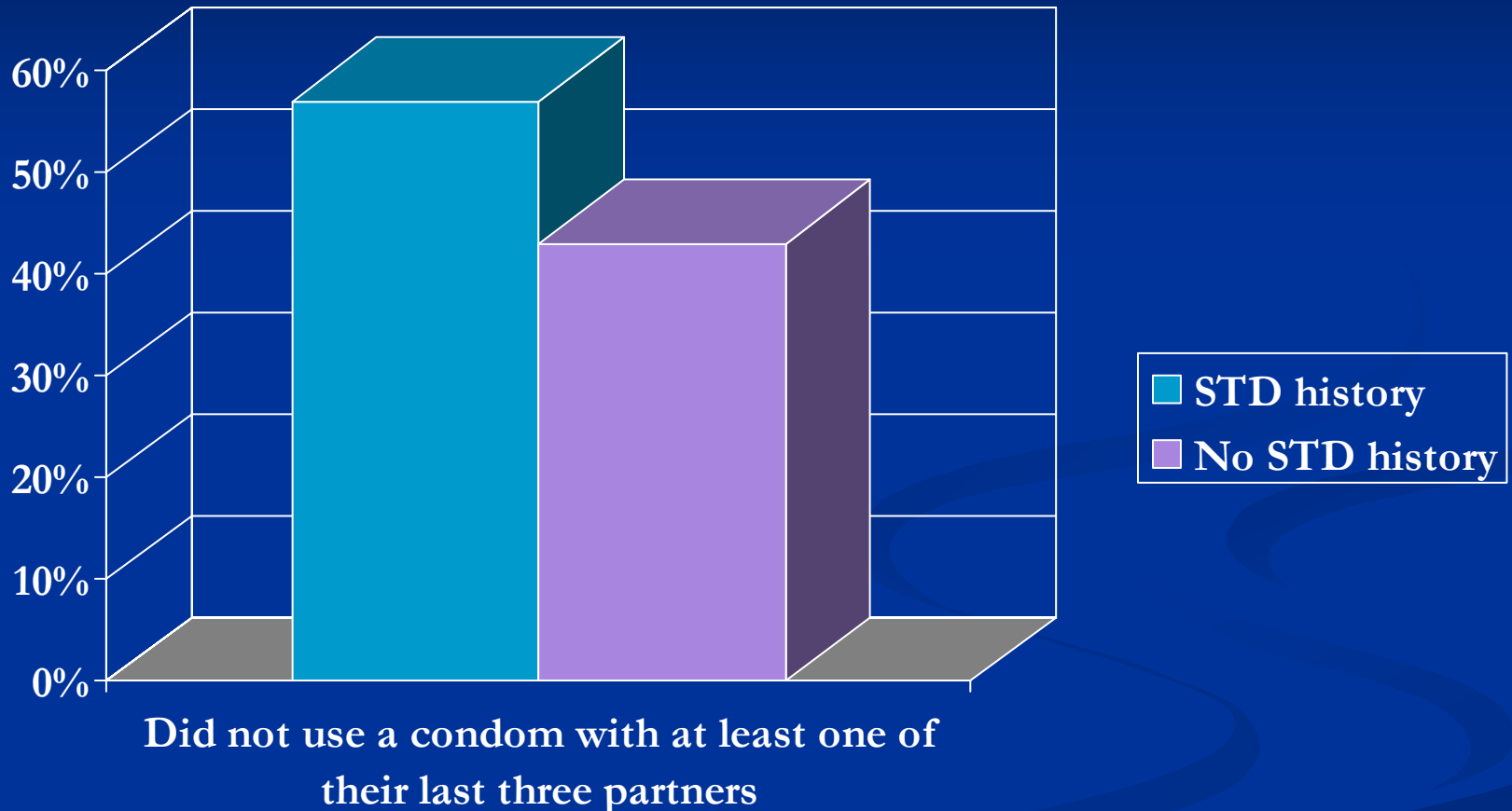
STD history and risk behavior



- More women with a STD history reported 3 or more partners in the last 12 months ($p=.001$)

Results

STD history and risk behavior



- More women with a current or past STD report not using a condom with at least one of their last three partners ($p=.066$)

Results

Risk Perception and Risk Behaviors

- Of women who reported 6 or more sex partners (23% of sample):
 - 67% disagreed when asked if they felt at risk of getting HIV/AIDS at the time of the study ($p=.004$)*
 - 35% felt that it was unlikely when asked if they thought that they could get infected with HIV/AIDS ($p=.008$)
 - 75% disagreed when asked if they thought that they may have been exposed to HIV ($p=.007$)*

*Likelihood ratio

Results

Risk Perception and Risk Behaviors

- Of women who reported 3 or more sex partners in the last 12 months (13% of sample):
 - 54% disagreed when asked if they felt at risk of getting HIV/AIDS at the time of the study ($p < .000$)*
 - 37% felt that it was unlikely when asked if they thought that they could get infected with HIV/AIDS ($p = .000$)
 - 77% disagreed when asked if they thought that they may have been exposed to HIV ($p = .031$)*

*Likelihood ratio

Results

Risk Perception and Risk Behaviors

- Of women who reported that they did not use a condom the last time they had sex with at least one of their last 3 partners (54% of sample):
 - 79% disagreed when asked if they felt at risk of getting HIV/AIDS at the time of the study (n.s.)
 - 44% felt that it was unlikely when asked if they thought that they could get infected with HIV/AIDS ($p=.086$)
 - 84% disagreed when asked if they thought that they may have been exposed to HIV ($p=.106$)

Conclusions

- Majority of participants did not perceive themselves to be at risk for HIV even if engaging in risky behaviors
- More than half the participants had an STD hx however majority still declined a free HIV test which did not involve an additional needle stick
- Prior infection with an STD did not appear to influence risk perception- even though it was associated with increased risk behaviors

Recommendations

- Develop culturally appropriate materials and methods that increase awareness of personal risk and necessity for testing among young African American woman
- Encourage health care providers to offer routine testing and risk assessment when possible to young African American women
- Conduct further research on perception of risk among African American women

Limitations

- Small sample size-results can not be generalized to the entire young African American population
- Selection bias-only women seeking services at the 3 family planning clinics
- Respondent bias (self-disclosure and recall bias)
- Questionnaire not specifically designed to study risk perceptions among African American women

Questions / Concerns

Thank You